

In Memoriam

Octavius Warre Malet.

THE Malets of Somerset in the thirteenth century were a family of baronial rank; they had the types and insignia of nobility; they guaranteed the confirmation of Magna Charta, endowed Abbeys and Priors, and left an indubitable mark of their importance by the additional name which two Somerset parishes have derived from them. Curry Mallet tells the country folk of West Somerset, as Shepton Mallet reminds the men of Mendip, of the days long ago, when a Malet was the lord of Curry and of Shepton.

Vix ea nostra voco; arms yielded place to the gown; the later Malets of Somerset distinguished themselves as Law Officers and Judges of the Crown, and lately Malets have done good service to the Throne in diplomacy and India, where our lamented friend, Octavius Warre Malet, found fit place for his active and gentle and loving nature.

He was the eighth son of Sir Charles Warre Malet, Bart., and was born on 7th May, 1811. He entered Winchester College as a Commoner in 1824. His eldest brother, Sir Alexander Malet, had been there, and was a Member, with Lord Hatherley and Dr. Hook, of Hook's School Parliament.¹ There the late W. E. Surtees formed a hearty friendship with Octavius, as well as with his brother, Arthur Malet. To Octavius Mr. Surtees, in 1888, dedicated some translations he had made during his long illness, of favourite odes of Horace, and we cannot better illustrate the kindly relation of the school-

¹ See Lord Hatherley's letter. Stebbing's *Life of Hook*, p. 602; 6th ed.

fellows and life-long friends than by printing the letter which was the preface to this memorial:—

To Octavius Warre Malet, Esq.

MY DEAR MALET,

Between sixty and seventy years ago, when, at Winchester, we slept in the four-bedded room in Cloister Gallery—now swept away—many an half-hour, which should have been given to sleep, did we devote to capping Latin verses from the only classics of which we knew very much by heart, Virgil and Horace.

On rallying somewhat from my late most severe illness, I some times amused myself by looking at my old school books, and made several rhyming translations from the odes of Horace. To remind you of old times I send you seven; and, as they will be less troublesome to you to read, I have had them printed.

You will recollect that *Edward Cardwell*, who also slept in the four-bedded room, and to whom composition in Latin verse was particularly easy, used to help us in our verse tasks, as well as lie awake capping verses with us.

Yours affectionately,

W. E. SURTEES.

Tainfield,

Taunton, July, 1888.

Octavius Warre Malet left Winchester in 1828, went to Haileybury in 1829, and after spending two years at that college, entered the Indian Civil Service in 1831. He married in 1852, Alice, daughter of Mr. Thomas Hawkes, M.P., and retiring in 1864, came to reside at Haygrass, in the neighbourhood of Taunton, and in August, 1867, became a member of the Committee of this Society.

Mr. Malet served on the Committee with diligence and efficiency; and in 1872 his zeal, geniality, and unselfishness found a great object for his untiring exertions. This was the acquisition by the Society of the Old Castle of Taunton.

In September, 1872, the Society's Annual Meeting was at Taunton, and held for the first time in the great Hall of the Castle, which was no longer used as a Court of Justice. The Castle buildings were inspected under the guidance of, and

illustrated by a paper from, our Vice-President, Mr. G. T. Clark, the first authority on mediæval Castles.² Mr. Clark's closing sentence was—"Taunton Castle is a work of unusual interest, and deserves to be cleared and employed as a promenade or museum, or for some public purpose, so that its walls and earthworks may become an embellishment to the ancient town to which it unquestionably gave rise."

These words probably fell on some heeding ears, but the idea of their accomplishment by the Society's purchasing the Castle was first suggested in 1872, by Mr. W. F. Elliot, to Mr. Maynard, who knew that the property was for sale. The plan was coldly looked upon by some members of the Committee, as being too adventuresome a scheme. It was to many only a dream, until Mr. O. W. Malet threw his whole soul into the movement, in which he was heartily joined by Mr. Surtees. On 5th March, 1873, a resolution was passed by a Council Meeting that the Castle be purchased by public subscription, under the auspices of the Society; that the buildings be utilized for the purposes of the Society, and the grounds be carefully laid out as a public garden.

Bold as the task might be, it was carried out with spirit and zeal by Mr. Malet. He was appointed, with Mr. Hunt, joint Honorary Secretary of the Society in June, and by Mr. Malet no means were left untried to secure subscriptions. At the Annual Meeting at Wells, in August, 1873, Mr. Sanford could announce that £1,000 had been promised. A public County Meeting was held on the 27th October following, and so liberal was the answer to the appeal that Mr. Malet was authorized to sign, and signed in February, 1874, the contract for the purchase of the Castle for £2,850. It was a proud day for him when he secured this noble object, and he received the grateful thanks of the Society then voted to him for the trouble he had taken in the matter with his usual modesty and self-effacement.

² See vol. xviii, p. 90.

In 1875 he left Haygrass, and resided at Torquay, but continued one of the Honorary Secretaries of the Society all his life. In 1880 he went to London, and there resided for the rest of his life. He always took every opportunity of assisting the Society's work, and continually made the improvement of the Castle buildings, and the reduction of the Castle debt, the objects of his care.

In 1884, at the Annual Meeting at Shepton Mallet, he read the report of the Castle Purchase Fund, and shewed that notwithstanding the great expenditure since the purchase of the Castle, the debt only amounted to £400. The writer had then the pleasure of securing for Mr. Malet the cordial thanks of the Society, as being mainly indebted to his constant and unfailing exertions for the purchase and acquisition, the rescue and preservation, of Taunton Castle.

He was never sparing of his time or labour in doing anything for public objects in Taunton and Somersetshire; whilst his courteous address, geniality and sympathy, at once conciliated the favour of those whose assistance he invoked. No touch of a selfish object ever tarnished the lustre of his motives. His friends, who were many, were singularly attached to him, and the young particularly were charmed by his unaffected kindness and interest in all their pursuits.

He died at 44, Elm Park Gardens, London, on the 11th December, 1891, leaving his widow and three sons and two daughters surviving him, and bequeathed his collection of Indian arms to the Society. He was a bright example of the character he always esteemed highest—that of an English Gentleman. He laid no stress on his ancient descent; it but added another incentive to his honourable and single-minded nature to carry out the dictates of an honest and true heart.

E. C. B.

Thomas Kerlake.

By the death of Mr. THOMAS KERSLAKE we have lost an eminent representative of the profounder school of archaeologists. A man of intrepid self-reliance, strong character, and somewhat defiant temper, he pursued his inquiries into the obscurities of far-back ages with the patience and diligence of an early schoolman. A worthy successor of the Lelands, Camdens, and Aubreys, he did not deal, like these, with merely written records, but was rather an explorer of the foundations of English history as concealed from the sight of the ordinary annalist, but which he illustrated by ingenious theory and deduction derived from the scientific study of nomenclature, or from racial differences and peculiarities. No truer lover of antiquarian research for its own delight to scholarly taste ever studied the days of old. The fruits of his investigations, inferences, deductions, keen reasonings, and complex arguments were usually published in pamphlet form at his own expense, and distributed among his friends; not forgetting the opponents of his theories, whom he took great delight in girding at. His quaint but forcible style of expression was suggestive of hard thinking, and of difficulty in shaping his ideas into precise language. It was that of a self-taught student, strongly Latinized but wanting in classical lucidity, oddly figurative, and hardly modelled to a sensitive literary taste, but at the same time interesting in its distinctness of character, and in its shewing the workings of a shrewd and original mind, of a man who had considered before he attempted to teach, and who did not care to tell again what had been again and again^d told.

Mr. Kerlake began business as a second-hand bookseller in Barton Alley, Bristol, in 1828, in partnership, until 1839, with his brother-in-law, Mr. Samuel Cornish, of London; but Mr. Kerlake's own name alone appeared in the Bristol business.

About the latter year he removed to the bottom of Park Street. A disastrous fire, in 1860, was the occasion of much loss to himself as well as to the world of books, for many rare and unique volumes and MSS. then perished. He finally removed to Queen's Road. Mr. Kerslake's business (which might, from the intelligence shown in its development, have been rather called a learned profession) was, at the time of the fire, one of the most extensive of its kind in the country or in the world. His intelligent appreciation and accurate knowledge of books and MSS. might be said to have added a new dignity to the trade of Bristol, which place is now, and partly to his honour, as remarkable as a book centre as it was formerly for its sugar and ships.

His catalogues were curiosities of learning, not only for the rarity or speciality of books offered, but for the notes appended to many of the items, which show a critical acumen and painstaking erudition that could come only from a man who understood the literary as well as the marketable value of the contents of his shelves. His latest pamphlet, issued a few months before his death, was entitled "Saint Richard the King of Englishmen and his Territory, A.D. 700—720," and has for the heading of its opening chapter "The Sowing and Sprouting of England," the treatment of which agricultural metaphor is intended to illustrate the fertilization of early missionary enterprise, but would hardly, as literary expression, have been precious to Mr. Matthew Arnold.

It might be thought that the death of such a true anti-quary as Mr. Kerslake would have been the occasion of more notice in the public press, especially in the local newspapers or in the weekly periodicals; but even in *The Academy*, to which he frequently contributed, no obituary record of him has appeared; and as far as we know the daily newspapers of the city where he spent about fifty years of his life, and where he was known as one of the most remarkable and intelligent of her citizens, have given but the slightest mention of the

value of his services to the intelligent study of the past. He was the first to give encouragement to the formation of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archæological Society, which was originated in 1874 by Mr. John Taylor, now City Librarian of Bristol.

Thomas Kerslake was born at Exeter in 1812, and died at Wynfrid, Clevedon, Jan. 5th, 1891. His wife, Catharine Morgan, of Bath, died in 1887. He left no family.

A list of his pamphlets, and of the principal articles contributed by him to the antiquarian journals, is appended to his "Saint Richard the King." Nearly all the former are in the Library of our Society. (See "Index Catalogue," 1889, p. 99).

W. GEORGE.
